



How to Disinfect a Water Well

- 1. Obtain 2 gallons of household bleach** (5.25% non-fragrance chlorine) and **2 gallons of white vinegar**. Shut off the power supply to the well. **Water softeners, reverse osmosis units and carbon filters must be on by-pass during the shock chlorination and until sampling.** The water softener should be fully regenerated prior to the chlorine treatment. Manufacturers of water softeners and other water treatment devices should be contacted for specific chlorination instructions for their devices to avoid potential damage. Remove the well cap (or the vent pipe or plug if the well is equipped with a sanitary well seal). Pull the electrical wire connectors up and out from inside the well.
- 2. Pour 2 gallons of white vinegar** directly into the well.
- 3. Turn on power supply** and connect a hose to an outside house hose bibb or spigot and run the water directly into the well for **15 minutes**. Turn off water supply and allow vinegar to settle for another **30 minutes**.
- 4. Pour 1 gallon bleach** into the well while also pouring along the inner edge of the well casing to disinfect the inner surface of the well. Turn on hose water supply and run the water from the hose into the well for **15 minutes** making sure the water runs down all interior surfaces of the well casing to disinfect those surfaces. Shut off the water supply to the hose. Go to **each sink, water fixture and water using appliance**, both inside and outside the house, and run each until a **chlorine odor is detected** and then shut it off and go to the next one. Proceed in this manner until all the plumbing contains bleach. To be positive that the chlorine has reached all the plumbing, you may want to obtain some chlorine test strips to check the water. The test strips can be found wherever swimming pool chemicals are sold.
- 5. Shut off the electric supply** to the well and close all the valves and pour the **second gallon of household bleach** directly into the well. Recap the well (or replace the vent pipe or plug). Turn on the electric. The water should sit for approximately **8 hours** when using the bleach and white vinegar method. If using chlorine bleach alone, all water valves should remain closed for at least **24 hours or longer** (toilets may be flushed if needed).
- 6. Open the hose spigot** and discharge water to the ground surface or a drainage ditch until the **chlorine odor disappears. IT IS NOT RECOMMENDED TO RUN THE CHLORINE WATER INTO THE SANITARY SEWER AND IT MAY DAMAGE A HOUSEHOLD SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEM.** Then open every household fixture and let the water run for the few minutes necessary until the **chlorine odor is gone**. To be positive that all of the chlorine has been removed from all the plumbing, the water can be rechecked with the same chlorine test strips used above.

The well should now be properly disinfected. Please **retest for confirmation of disinfection.**